

# Words In The News

## Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets  
with answers

### Concern over Assam rhinos

18 April 2007



**BBC WORLD SERVICE**  
LEARNING ENGLISH



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# BBC Learning English – Words in the News

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**Level:** Intermediate and above

**Topic:** The illegal hunting of wild animals (rhinos) in India

**Language:** Vocabulary of a news report

**Aims:**

Reading skills	– Understanding a short news report
Language skills	– Practise using the passive voice
Writing skills	– A short persuasive speech

**Materials:**

Worksheet 1	– Comprehension questions
Worksheet 2	– Vocabulary matching task
Worksheet 3	– Grammar – passive
News story	– Available online at:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2007/04/070418\\_rhinos.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2007/04/070418_rhinos.shtml)

**Preparation:** Before the lesson, make enough copies of worksheet 2 so that there is one worksheet for every 4 – 5 students. Cut up the vocabulary and explanations, to make a matching exercise. Students also need one copy each of worksheets 1 and 3.

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#### LESSON STAGES

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##### **A Stimulate student interest in text**

Generate interest about today's topic by discussing animals that face extinction. Write these animals on the board. In pairs, students discuss what they know about the animals – where you can find them and what dangers/problems they face. If you can, find some pictures from the Internet.

**Tigers   Red squirrels   Whales   Elephants   Polar bears**

Manage the feedback as a whole class activity/discussion.

Tigers - South East Asia/Eastern Siberia. Face extinction due to hunting by humans for their fur and for traditional medicine.

Red squirrels - UK. Face extinction because of competition from the grey squirrel.

Whales - the oceans. Low numbers, partly because of hunting.

Elephants – Africa and Asia. Declining numbers because people hunt them for their ivory.

Polar bears – the Arctic. Global warming is destroying their icy habitat; they cannot find food.

##### **B Pre-teach essential vocabulary**

Elicit/present key vocabulary that students need either to understand the key points in the text or to understand and/or answer any questions that you'll set them later in the lesson.

The vocabulary is from Words in the News (so you can elicit the vocabulary by using the explanations provided online or below).

You could either pre-teach the vocabulary at this stage of the lesson or you could use the vocabulary building activity from further down in this lesson plan. Have students working together in small groups and ask them to try to match the vocabulary with the definitions.

Encourage them to work with the other groups to pool their knowledge. When they have done as much as they can, if they have dictionaries, ask them to look up the words to check their answers and to find out the definitions of any words they are not sure of. If they don't have dictionaries, check their answers and give them help.

Whichever method you use to elicit/present the vocabulary, you should then model it (say it clearly, highlighting the word stress) and get them to repeat the words after you.

##### **rhino horn**

the large pointed bone on the head of a rhinoceros

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#### **an aphrodisiac**

like a medicine, but a stimulant for sexual desire

#### **poaching**

illegal hunting

#### **separatists**

people who want their local region to become independent of the national government

#### **decimation**

destruction

#### **devastating**

very destructive

#### **floods**

water covering land that is usually dry

#### **to flee**

to run away from danger

#### **an international syndicate**

a global organisation, often criminal

#### **a free run**

a chance to do something without any opposition

### **C Written record of vocabulary**

Write the words on the board, eliciting spelling as you write. Elicit and show the word stress of each item and word class, if appropriate.

Give students some time to copy the board work into their notebooks.

Boardwork:

**rhino horn**

**an aphrodisiac**

**separatists**

**decimation**

**devastating**

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**floods**

**to flee**

**an international syndicate**

**electric saws**

#### **D Set global questions**

Tell the students they are going to read a text which is about rhinos in India.  
Put these questions on the board:

1. Why do people hunt rhinos?
2. Is the number of rhinos killed going up or down?

Students read text the first time.

Give them a time limit (1 - 2 minutes) to read the text quickly to find the answer to the 2 questions. They do not need to understand the details for each topic.

#### **E Check answers**

Elicit students' answers to questions 1 and 2.

The answers are:

- 1 – Because the rhino horn is very valuable. People want it as a medicine and an aphrodisiac
- 2 – More rhinos are being killed than a few years ago.

#### **F Set comprehension questions**

Hand out Worksheet 1 or use the online quiz. Students complete the worksheet to help them understand the text in more detail. Give them a time limit (5 - 6 minutes) to read the text a second time in more detail and to answer the questions.

#### **G Check answers**

Elicit True or False answers. Direct attention to a particular paragraph if an answer is wrong to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 1 and answer key).

#### **H Vocabulary consolidation/building**

Students do the vocabulary matching exercise (worksheet 2 that you cut up before the lesson): in small groups they match each word with the right definition.

#### **I Check answers**

Elicit answers. If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer.

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#### J Grammar focus: the passive

Write these 3 sentences (adapted from the article) on the board.

- 1 - Five to ten rhinos are killed every year.
- 2 - In the last three months, six rhinos have been killed.
- 3 - In the late 1990s, rebels killed the poachers.

Ask students to identify the main verb in each sentence - *to kill*

Ask the students which sentence tells us who does the action - *sentence 3 (rebels)*

This sentence uses the active voice; the verb subject is the agent or 'doer' of the action (rebels). The verb object receives the action (the poachers).

Sentences 1 and 2 do not say who does the action. These sentences use the passive voice; the verb subject (rhinos) receives the action. In these examples, we do not know the agent/'doer' of the action.

Ask the students how we form the passive voice - *to be + past participle of main verb*.

Ask the students when we use the passive voice - 1) we may not know who does the action  
2) the doer of the action is unimportant 3) we may not need/want to say who does the action.

Ask the students to re-write sentences 1 and 2 in the active, using 'poachers' as the agent of the action, and to re-write sentence 3 in the passive.

- 1 - Poachers kill 5 to 10 rhinos every year.
- 2 - In the last three months, poachers have killed six rhinos
- 3 - In the late 1990s, the poachers were killed by rebels

Point out how we use 'by' in the passive. Then ask students to find other examples of the passive in the article.

It is considered an aphrodisiac	(by many people)
(it is) used for local medicines	(by many people)
they cannot be guarded	(by wildlife officers/security guards)
their horns (have been) taken away	(by poachers)
...more watchtowers are needed at Kaziranga	(by wildlife officers/security guards)

Can the students work out who or what the agents ('doers' of the action) are in each case?

Students now do the practice exercise on Worksheet 3

#### K Check answers

If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 3 and answer key).

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#### **L Follow-up activity: Writing**

Tell students they are going to represent an environmental campaign group and they are going to write a short persuasive speech calling for action on an environmental issue. As a whole class, brainstorm environmental issues.

Deforestation   Global warming   Acid rain   Water pollution   Water shortage  
Animal extinction (tigers, polar bears...)   Nuclear energy   Wind/solar power  
CO2 production (carbon footprint)   Waste/rubbish/recycling

In pairs, students should choose one of the issues and brainstorm what they know about the issue and, most importantly, what can be done about the issue.

The students then have to write a short persuasive speech - three paragraphs should be sufficient - for a competition to win funding (\$1 million) for an environmental campaign. In the speech the students must say why their issue is an important one, what can be done to solve the problem and how their campaign group would use the money.

A persuasive speech should have an interesting or dramatic opening sentence to get the audience's attention, and a powerful ending. It might use strong adjectives and adverbs.

The students can write the speeches individually or in pairs. After they have written the speeches, they should give their speech to the whole class or in smaller groups. If you can, organise a vote for which campaign group should get the money, or ask the students to rank the different issues in order of importance.

#### **M Feedback**

Give praise for content and show your interest in the different ideas.

Give praise for correct language, and give feedback on incorrect language. You could write some example phrases or sentences on the board and elicit from students which ones are correct and which ones are wrong and why.

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#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

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#### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Are the following sentences true or false?

1.	Rhino horn powder is sold legally in Asia.	T/F
2.	The government troops deliberately targeted and killed the poachers.	T/F
3.	Every year, some rhinos are killed outside Kaziranga wildlife park, away from the lowlands, after heavy rain.	T/F
4.	Wildlife officials are worried because recently rhinos were killed inside the Kaziranga park during the rainy season.	T/F
5.	The authorities suspect local people of being behind the killings.	T/F
6.	Currently, there are too few guards and their equipment is insufficient to do anything to stop the poaching.	T/F



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#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

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#### VOCABULARY

Match these words and phrases to their definitions.

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <b>rhino horn</b>                 | A. illegal hunting   |
| 2. <b>an aphrodisiac</b>             | B. to run away from danger   |
| 3. <b>poaching</b>                   | C. the large bone on the head of a rhinoceros  |
| 4. <b>separatists</b>                | D. a chance to do something without any opposition                                     |
| 5. <b>decimation</b>                 | E. a global organisation, often criminal   |
| 6. <b>devastating</b>                | F. like a medicine, but a stimulant for sexual desire                                  |
| 7. <b>floods</b>                     | G. destruction   |
| 8. <b>to flee</b>                    | H. water covering land that is usually dry   |
| 9. <b>an international syndicate</b> | I. people who want their local region to become independent of the national government |
| 10. <b>a free run</b>                | J. very destructive  |

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#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

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##### GRAMMAR FOCUS – Passive

Re-write the first sentence so that the meaning is the same, but the active becomes passive.

Example:        They are killing more rhinos these days.  
                    More rhinos are being killed these days

1. They are destroying the rain forests in South America  
   The rain forests \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Air pollution causes acid rain  
   Acid rain \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Humans have hunted whales for thousand of years.  
   Whales \_\_\_\_\_
  4. In 1986, the nuclear explosion in Chernobyl polluted the atmosphere with radiation.  
   In 1986, the atmosphere \_\_\_\_\_
  5. This year, they have caught too many tuna fish in the Mediterranean Sea  
   This year, too many tuna fish \_\_\_\_\_
  6. When we burn fossil fuels we produce CO2  
   CO2 \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Global warming will soon affect poor countries  
   Poor countries \_\_\_\_\_
  8. We can't stop global warming, but we can reduce its effects.  
   Global warming \_\_\_\_\_
  9. We should make flying more expensive  
   Flying \_\_\_\_\_
  10. We are going to lose many species of animal forever.  
   Many species of animal \_\_\_\_\_
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#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

1. False– Paragraph 1 of the written text says, 'A kilogram of rhino horn powder fetches nearly forty thousand US dollars at Asia's contraband markets.' Contraband means illegal goods or products.
2. False – Paragraph 2 says, 'the troops often mistook the poachers as linked to rebels and shot them.'
3. True – Paragraph 3 says, 'Five to ten rhinos are killed every year on average, mostly during Assam's devastating floods because they have to flee Kaziranga's low marshy lands to higher hills where they cannot be guarded.'
4. False – Paragraph 3 says, 'six rhinos have been killed inside Kaziranga and their horns taken away with no rains around.'
5. False – Paragraph 4 says, 'they suspect that an international syndicate is operating in the area... '
6. True – Paragraph 4 says, 'more armed guards equipped with better weapons, more vehicles, boats and elephants for movement and more watchtowers are needed at Kaziranga to stop the poachers from having a free run.'

#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. F | 3. A | 4. I | 5. G  |
| 6. J | 7. H | 8. B | 9. E | 10. D |

#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

1. The rain forests are being destroyed in South America.
2. Acid rain is caused by air pollution.
3. Whales have been hunted by humans for thousands of years.
4. In 1986, the atmosphere was polluted with radiation by the nuclear explosion in Chernobyl.
5. This year, too many tuna fish have been caught in the Mediterranean Sea.
6. CO<sub>2</sub> is produced when fossil fuels are burnt.
7. Poor countries will soon be affected by global warming.
8. Global warming can't be stopped but its effects can be reduced.
9. Flying should be made more expensive.
10. Many species of animal are going to be lost forever.